

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-56 (cancelled).

57. (currently amended) A method for managing a call from a caller to an information assistance service, the method comprising:

receiving signals associated with the call which contain a telephone number indicating a local calling area associated with a communications device from which the call originates, an account which is associated with the telephone number being set up with the information assistance service, and which allows receipt of information assistance and one or more types of call to be made information concerning a first calling area associated with the call;

eliciting from the caller an information assistance request;

searching a database for results responsive to the information assistance request, the results including a destination telephone number;

determining whether that a connection is to be made from the first local calling area to a second calling area outside the local calling area, the second calling area being indicated by the destination telephone number entails a service of a selected type;

determining whether the caller is authorized to have the connection which entails the service of the selected type made through the information assistance service based on the types of call allowed by the account a status of an account associated with the caller; and

making the connection when it is determined that the caller is authorized to have the connection made which entails the service of the selected type.

Claim 58 (cancelled).

59. (previously presented) The method of claim 58 wherein the connection includes a long distance connection.

60. (previously presented) The method of claim 57 wherein the information assistance service is provided by an operator.

Claim 61 (cancelled).

62. (currently amended) A method for managing a call from a caller to an information assistance service, the method comprising:

receiving signals associated with the call which contain a calling telephone number
associated with a calling station from which the call originates, an account which is associated
with the calling telephone number being set up with the information assistance service, and
which allows receipt of information assistance and one or more types of call to be made
information concerning a calling telephone number associated with the call;

eliciting from the caller an information assistance request;

in response to the information assistance request searching a database for a destination telephone number;

determining whether that a connection between is to be made from a local calling station from which the call originates area to a second calling area outside the local calling area called station associated with the destination telephone number entails a service of a selected type based on a comparison of at least a portion of the calling telephone number with at least a portion of the destination telephone number;

determining whether the caller is authorized to have the connection which entails the service of the selected type made through the information assistance service based on the types of call allowed by the account a status of an account associated with the caller; and

connecting a the calling station to the called station when it is determined that the caller is authorized to have the connection made which entails a service of a selected type.

63. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 wherein the information includes signals include an automatic numbering identification (ANI) from which the calling telephone number is derived.

64. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 wherein the portion of the calling telephone number indicates a first the local calling area, and the portion of the destination telephone number indicates a the second calling area different from the first calling area.

65. (previously presented) The method of claim 64 wherein the connection includes a long distance connection.

66. (previously presented) The method of claim 62 wherein the information assistance service is provided by an operator.

Claim 67 (cancelled).

68. (currently amended) A method of providing an information assistance service to a customer, comprising:

receiving signals in setting up a call from the customer through an inbound channel;

based on the received signals, identifying a calling telephone number associated with a

calling station from which the customer calls, the calling telephone number indicating a local calling area, an account which is associated with the calling telephone number being set up with the information assistance service, and which allows receipt of information assistance and one or more types of call to be made;

eliciting an information assistance request from the customer;

in response to the information assistance request, searching a database for a destination telephone number;

determining whether that a connection is to be made from a first the local calling area indicated by the calling telephone number to a second calling area outside the local calling area, the second calling area being indicated by the destination telephone number entails a service of a selected type, by comparing the first calling area with the second calling area;

determining whether the customer is authorized to have the connection ~~which entails the service of the selected type~~ made, based on at least a result of the comparison the types of call allowed by the account;

allocating an outbound channel to establish a connection to the destination telephone number when it is determined that the customer is authorized to have the connection made ~~which entails the service of the selected type~~;

dialing the destination telephone number over the outbound channel; and
connecting the inbound channel to the outbound channel.

69. (previously presented) The method of claim 68 wherein the received signals contain information concerning an ANI.

Claim 70 (cancelled).

Claim 71 (cancelled).

72. (previously presented) The method of claim 68 wherein the information assistance service is provided by an operator.

73. (currently amended) A system for managing a call from a caller to an information assistance service, the system comprising:

an interface for receiving signals associated with the call which contain a telephone number indicating a local calling area associated with a communications device from which the call originates, an account which is associated with the telephone number being set up with the information assistance service, and which allows receipt of information assistance and one or more types of call to be made information concerning a first calling area associated with the call, an information assistance request being elicited from the caller;

a database for looking up results responsive to the information assistance request, the results including a destination telephone number;

a processor for determining whether that a connection is to be made from the first local calling area to a second calling area outside the local calling area, the second calling area being indicated by the destination telephone number entails a service of a selected type;

a controller for determining whether the caller is authorized to have the connection which entails the service of the selected type made through the information assistance service based on the types of call allowed by the account a status of an account associated with the caller;
and

a switching device for making the connection when it is determined that the caller is authorized to have the connection made which entails the service of the selected type.

Claim 74 (cancelled).

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75. (previously presented) The system of claim 74 wherein the connection includes a long distance connection.

76. (previously presented) The system of claim 73 wherein the information assistance service is provided by an operator.

Claim 77 (cancelled).